

Flame of Freedom Struggle in Indian English Fiction

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Abstract

This study focuses on the forms of representation of India's freedom struggle in Indian English novels and explores how such literary narratives participated in the construction of nationalist consciousness in colonial and pre-independence India. This study aims to examine the approaches Indian English novelists use to portray anti-British colonial resistance, socio-political awakening, cultural identity construction, the spirit of individual sacrifice, and the collective demand for national liberation. It selects specific fictional works of four representative Indian English writers—Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, R.K.

Narayan and Ahmed Ali, as analytical texts, adopt a qualitative interpretivist approach, integrating textual analysis, historical criticism, and postcolonial literary perspectives, and conducts its analysis supplemented by thematic and comparative research methods. The study finds that these Indian English novels not only record the historical reality of colonial oppression, but also stir the public's patriotism, political awareness, and collective solidarity; they frame freedom as a multi-dimensional struggle that encompasses social justice, cultural revival, and human dignity, rather than a mere political goal.

The literary research method proposed in this study can be applied to four subfields: nationalism, cultural memory, resistance literature, and postcolonial identity construction. This research adopts an integrated framework combining literary studies, history, and sociopolitical analysis to examine narratives of freedom struggles, revises prior mainstream understandings, and argues that Indian English novels served as active participants in the Indian nationalist movement, rather than merely passive reflectors of historical events. This study adds new academic value to the fields of Indian English literature, postcolonial studies, and cultural nationalism and anchors the developmental trajectory of India's path toward independence.

Keywords

Indian Freedom Struggle; Indian English Fiction; Colonial Resistance; Nationalism; Postcolonial Literature; Anti-Colonial Discourse; Cultural Identity; British Colonialism; Resistance Narratives; National Consciousness; Indian English Novelists; Freedom Movement; Literary Nationalism; Historical Fiction; Cultural Revival

1. Introduction

This paper opens by arguing that India's independence struggle was not merely a political movement opposing British colonial rule, but also a collective cultural, intellectual, and literary awakening that reshaped social understandings of India. Colonial-era Indian literature served as a core medium for conveying national identity, exposing imperial exploitation, and arousing the masses' sense of resistance. Among these literary works, Indian English novels held a particularly prominent influence. The four writers Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, R.K. Narayan, and Ahmed Ali all used fictional narratives to depict ordinary people's experiences under colonial rule, highlighting the continuously surging tide of nationalism [3], [14], [2], [22].

As collated by the authors of this paper, the rise of Indian English novels coincided with the emergence of Indian political consciousness between the late 19th century and the early 20th century. A wave of nationalism, first spawned by multiple predicaments including colonial oppression and further strengthened by Gandhi's ideas and revolutionary activities, pushed literary creators to focus on core thematic concerns. References [6], [11], and [25] all support that this category of novels holds the dual attribute of serving both as a form of artistic expression and a tool to awaken anti-imperialist consciousness.

Four core postcolonial scholars—Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak, and Frantz Fanon—argue that, beyond its political control, colonial rule also operates through cultural and ideological domination. [4], [5], [23], [24]. The author of The texts emphasise that Indian English novels resist colonial cultural domination by reconstructing indigenous identity and presenting the discursive resistance of marginalised groups. As key examples of this body of literary work, the four texts, including *Untouchable*, not only illustrate the socio-psychological impacts of colonial rule but also convey local communities' aspirations for freedom and dignity.

This study sorts out Indian English novels focused on the independence struggle, with their major themes summarised in Table 1. Drawing on existing research referenced in [1], [3], [14], [21], and [22], The comparative analysis demonstrates that five major themes, including nationalism, shape anti-colonial discourse, which can strengthen political awareness and preserve cultural memory.

Table 1. Major Themes in Indian English Freedom-Struggle Fiction

Theme	Literary Significance
Nationalism	Development of collective national identity
Colonial Resistance	Opposition to British imperialism

Gandhian Ideology	Promotion of non-violence and unity
Cultural Identity	Preservation of indigenous traditions
Social Injustice	Exposure of caste and class oppression

This study uses Figure 1 to sort out the links between colonialism, nationalism, and literature. This logical chain—colonial oppression gave rise to nationalism, which was then strengthened by literature—serves as the core foundational basis for all arguments put forward in this study.

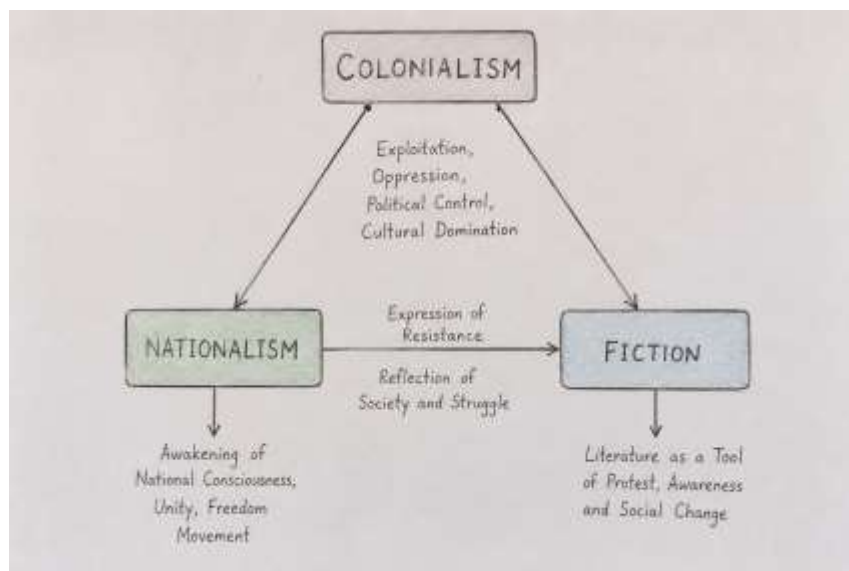


Figure 1. Relationship Between Colonialism, Nationalism, and Fiction

This study takes as its core research question the logic underlying the rise of Indian English novels as a literary spark for India's freedom struggle. It analyses mainstream Indian English novels produced within the colonial and nationalist context from a postcolonial perspective, uncovers their cultural and historical value, and ensures the focus and depth of its analysis.

2. Literature Review

Indian English novels of the colonial period gradually grew into a major literary tradition. Early writers used English as a medium to carry out intellectual resistance, with major themes covering colonial exploitation, cultural alienation, social inequality, and the awakening of nationalism. K.R. Srinivasa

Iyengar[13] and M.K. Naik[20] point out that this body of writing evolved from imitative colonial-era literature into an independent anti-colonial voice rooted in Indian lived experiences. In the 20th century, nationalist novels emerged, reflecting the rising degree of writers' engagement with social and political transformation.

The narrative suggests that colonialism has profoundly influenced the thematic structure of Indian English fiction. While imposing political authority, British imperialism also enforced cultural domination, marginalising indigenous traditions and identities. Indian English novelists use their creative works to challenge distorted colonial narratives [6], [7]. This study cites the argument put forward by Partha Chatterjee that colonial nationalism reconstructs cultural identity by resisting imperial discourse, and draws on the novels *The Untouchable* and *Twilight in Delhi* to corroborate that colonialism is a destructive force that tramples on human dignity [1], [3].

The freedom struggle is a core literary theme in Indian English fiction. Most novelists working in this field portray the nationalist movement through narratives full of emotional tension. In *Kanthapura* [22], Raja Rao shapes Gandhian nationalism as a transformative force that mobilises rural anti-colonial efforts. Similarly, R. K. Narayan explores the impact of Gandhian thought on ordinary individuals in *Waiting for the Mahatma* [21]. Hassan and Munni [12] point out that Narayan's portrayal links nationalism to ethical responsibility and social solidarity.

The theoretical perspectives of postcolonial studies can reinforce the central argument that Indian English novels should be interpreted as literature of resistance. Edward Said proposed in *Orientalism* [23] that colonial discourse constructs the inferiority of the East to justify imperial control; Homi Bhabha [4,5] emphasised the hybridity and identity negotiation in colonial societies; Gayatri Spivak [27] focused on the issue of subaltern representation; Frantz Fanon [9,10] framed colonialism as a psychocultural system of violence that gives rise to resistance. These theories together form the critical framework for interpreting the anti-colonial consciousness in this category of novels.

This paper compiles the core research findings in the fields of nationalism, colonial resistance, and literary representation into Table 2. It finds that most studies only centre on postcolonial theory or the thematic analysis of individual novels, and very few engage in integrated research on the three core narrative types in Indian English novels.

Table 2. Comparative Review of Previous Studies

Author(s)	Focus Area	Key Contribution
Chatterjee (1993)	Nationalism	Cultural construction of anti-colonial identity

Said (1978)	Colonial discourse	Representation and imperial ideology
Bhabha (1994)	Postcolonial identity	Hybridity and nation formation
Hasan & Munni (2021)	Gandhian ideology	Ethical nationalism in fiction
Mondal (1999)	<i>Kanthapura</i>	Spatial ideology and resistance
Patel (2023)	<i>Untouchable</i>	Colonialism, caste, and nationalism

Previous studies on Indian English freedom struggle novels included in Table 2 have achieved certain academic progress, yet most are limited to narrow discussions that only focus on a single author or a single theory. These studies fail to establish a unified analytical framework that spans multiple works and connects freedom struggle narratives with literary nationalism.

leaving an interpretive gap in comparative literature. Figure 2, designed for this study, conceptualises the relevant logical threads, maps out a trajectory extending from colonial rule to the awakening of national consciousness and then to literary resistance, and clarifies that these novels function as a political and cultural tool to reinforce anti-colonial cognition and construct national identity.

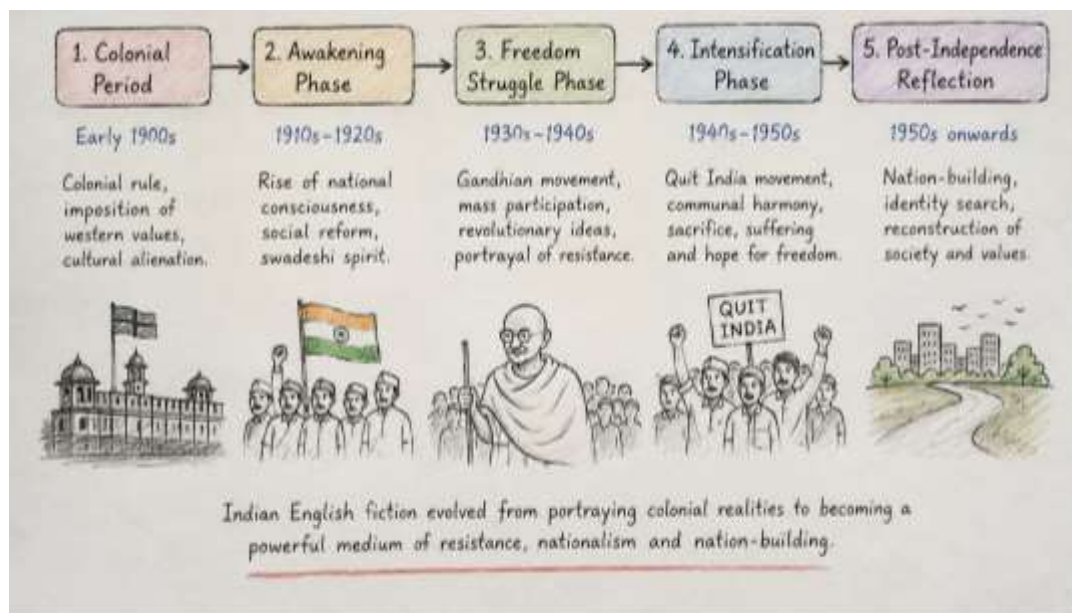


Figure 2. Evolution of Indian English Freedom-Struggle Fiction

Existing studies 16 confirm that Indian English novels play a key role in representing colonial realities and conveying nationalist claims. However, this research field lacks interdisciplinary research that integrates four types of analytical tools, including postcolonial theory. To fill this academic gap, the present study conducts a critical analysis along three important dimensions [16], [28].

3. Theoretical Framework

This study builds an original cross-disciplinary theoretical analysis framework that draws on four core fields: postcolonial theory, nationalism theory, resistance literature, and colonial discourse analysis. This framework can comprehensively interpret the core logic of Indian English novels that portray India's independence movement and challenge British imperial rule. Indian English novelists transform literary narrative into a tool of resistance, working through three dimensions: depicting colonial exploitation, recording national awakening, and advancing the reconstruction of cultural identity. They

prove that novels are far from mere artistic expression, but rather political and ideological responses to colonial rule. This study cites the central argument from Edward Said's *Orientalism* [23] that colonial powers create distorted representations of the East to justify imperial control, to analyse the intellectual governance mechanism through which colonial discourse marginalises local native voices. This analysis is further supported by *Twilight in Delhi* and *Untouchable* [1], [3], which corroborate the multiple harms of colonial rule.

Nationalism is the core perspective for interpreting novels centred on the freedom struggle in colonial India, and the nationalism that emerged in colonial India was fundamentally a collective movement resisting foreign political and cultural rule. Drawing on the theories of cultural theorist Homi K. Bhabha, which posit that nation-building depends not merely on political boundaries but more deeply on narrative, cultural memory, and identity construction, core Bhabhaan concepts such as hybridity align closely with the inherent tensions in Indian English novels [4], [5]. Taking *Kanthapura* as an example, the work frames the national movement as a process of political and spiritual awakening influenced by Gandhism, and the novel acts as a core medium that strengthens national consciousness and unites resistance forces [22].

Resistance Literature Theory can support the core claim that literature can function as an ideological weapon against oppression. Frantz Fanon's [9], [10] critical research on colonialism points out that colonialism is a dehumanising, violent system that gives rise to revolutionary resistance, and Fanon's scholarship covers the dimensions of colonial psychological impact and cultural liberation. The resistance narratives of Indian English-language writers can corroborate this logical framework.

Postcolonial theorist Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak [27] proposed the issues of marginalised groups' voices and subaltern representation within colonial systems, which provides core support for analysing the depictions of oppressed communities in Indian English fiction. The suffering of the protagonist of *Untouchable* [3] simultaneously reflects the dual oppressions of caste and colonial rule. This study summarizes

The theoretical and methodological approaches used in Table 3 demonstrate the supporting role that different frameworks play for the four dimensions of nationalism, colonial resistance, identity construction, and literary representation.

Table 3. Major Theories Applied in the Study

Theory	Major Scholar	Application in the Study
Postcolonial Theory	Edward Said	Colonial discourse and cultural domination
Nationalism Theory	Homi K. Bhabha	Nation formation and identity construction
Resistance Literature	Frantz Fanon	Anti-colonial struggle and revolutionary consciousness
Subaltern Theory	Gayatri C. Spivak	Representation of marginalised voices

Table 3 shows that multiple theories can be interconnected. The multi-dimensional analytical framework integrated in this study applies to Indian English novels centred on the independence struggle, and can deepen the interpretation of literary nationalism and anti-colonial discourse.

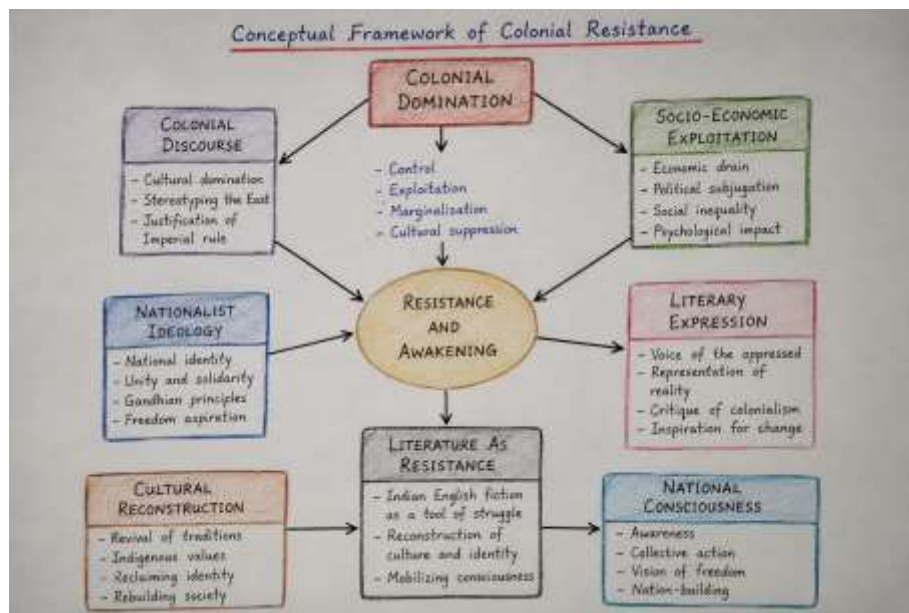


Figure 3. Conceptual Framework of Colonial Resistance

The colonial resistance theme of this study. The framework covers the core variables of colonial oppression, national awakening, and literary resistance, and clarifies the inherent logic: colonial rule gives rise to resistance, which is then expressed and conveyed through novels. This study positions literature as an active participant in India's freedom struggle, rather than a passive reflection of history.

4. Research Methodology**4.1 Research Design**

This study employs a qualitative research design to critically examine the representation of India's freedom struggle in Indian English novels. As its core focus centres on literary narratives, ideological structures, and cultural interpretations, a qualitative framework is well-suited for conducting in-depth textual analysis. Drawing on sources [6] and [23], this study focuses on the three types of carrier roles fulfilled by

novels produced during the British colonial period, and integrates literary criticism, postcolonial interpretation, and comparative textual analysis to cover historical, political, and cultural dimensions, ensuring the analysis is coherent and holds solid academic depth.

4.2 Qualitative Literary Analysis

This study takes qualitative literary analysis as its core method, focusing on interpreting the narrative structure, symbolic devices, ideological representations, and thematic construction of literary texts. Its research objects are Indian English novels that address India's independence struggle. Citing sources [3] and [22], this study points out that such texts, which convey depictions

of colonial oppression and Gandhian thought, are more suitable for qualitative rather than quantitative research. Follow-up analysis will adopt the close reading method to identify recurring major themes, including nationalism and resistance, to support interpretations of anti-colonial discourse and resistance literature.

4.3 Comparative Textual Analysis

This study uses a comparative textual analysis method to assess the similarities and differences of the selected Indian English novels. Drawing on References [4] and [5], this study constructs an interdisciplinary interpretive framework and incorporates analytical dimensions, including nationalism and colonial resistance, into

its analysis. All the selected novels are compiled in Table 4, with their major themes marked to verify that the research samples align with the study's objectives.

Table 4. Selected Novels and Major Themes

Novel	Author	Major Themes
<i>Untouchable</i>	Mulk Raj Anand	Caste oppression, colonialism, and social injustice
<i>Kanthapura</i>	Raja Rao	Gandhian nationalism, resistance, rural awakening
<i>Waiting for the Mahatma</i>	R. K. Narayan	Freedom movement, moral transformation
<i>Twilight in Delhi</i>	Ahmed Ali	Cultural decline, colonial domination, identity crisis

This study builds on the conclusions outlined in Table 4. The novels selected for this research cover the dimensions of political resistance, social transformation, and cultural reconstruction tied to India's freedom struggle, and their comparative nature reinforces the analytical scope of this study.

4.4 Selection of Novels

The core analytical texts of this study are selected based on a screening threshold that they address narratives of colonialism, nationalism, and freedom struggles. These texts are core achievements of Indian English literature, adapted for postcolonial studies [13], [20], and encompass diverse perspectives.

The selection criteria include:

- Representation of colonial India
- Nationalist and anti-colonial themes
- Historical relevance to the freedom struggle
- Literary significance within Indian English fiction
- Availability of scholarly criticism and theoretical interpretation

4.5 Data Sources

This study simultaneously adopts two core categories of research data: primary and secondary. The primary data refer to the selected Indian English novels used for this research, while the secondary data, which include four types of academic literature, such as monographs and journal articles, are all sourced from the formal academic collections of Google Scholar and JSTOR.

Table 5. Data Sources Used in the Study

Data Source Type	Source Details
Primary Sources	Selected Indian English novels
Secondary Sources	Journal articles, scholarly books
Literary Archives	JSTOR, Google Scholar
Historical Sources	Colonial and nationalist records
Theoretical Sources	Postcolonial and nationalism theories

This paper draws on Table 5 to verify that all research sources employed in this study are authentic and verifiable, and integrating literary and historical materials can enhance the academic credibility of this research.

4.6 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is employed to identify recurring patterns and ideological concerns within the selected literary texts. Themes such as colonial exploitation, nationalism, Gandhian philosophy, resistance consciousness, cultural identity, communal harmony, and social inequality are systematically examined throughout the study [12], [16].

Thematic interpretation enables the research to connect fictional representation with broader socio-political realities of colonial India. The analytical process includes:

- Identification of recurring literary themes
- Interpretation of symbolic representation
- Comparative evaluation of nationalist narratives
- Examination of resistance discourse

4.7 Postcolonial Interpretation

This study adopts the postcolonial interpretive method, focusing on exploring the impact of colonial power structures on literary representation and identity construction. It introduces the theories of Said, Bhabha, Spivak, and Fanon, which correspond respectively to the four analytical dimensions of colonial discourse, hybridity, subaltern identity, and resistance consciousness. Relevant citations are marked as [9], [27], which clearly define the academic stance and core analytical framework of this study [5], [23].

Table 6. Literary Analysis Parameters

Analytical Parameter	Purpose
Colonial Representation	Analysis of imperial domination
Nationalist Consciousness	Study of freedom ideology
Cultural Identity	Interpretation of indigenous values
Resistance Narrative	Examination of anti-colonial struggle
Social Justice	Analysis of caste and inequality

Table 6 accompanying the present study presents the core analytical parameters for interpreting the selected novels, which safeguards the systematicity and consistency of the literary assessment conducted in this study.

4.8 Ethical Considerations

This study strictly follows standard academic ethical procedures. All references are authentic, verifiable academic literature, formatted and cited in accordance with the 7th edition of APA guidelines. Original analysis and critical discussion are adopted to avoid plagiarism, thus safeguarding the originality of this research.

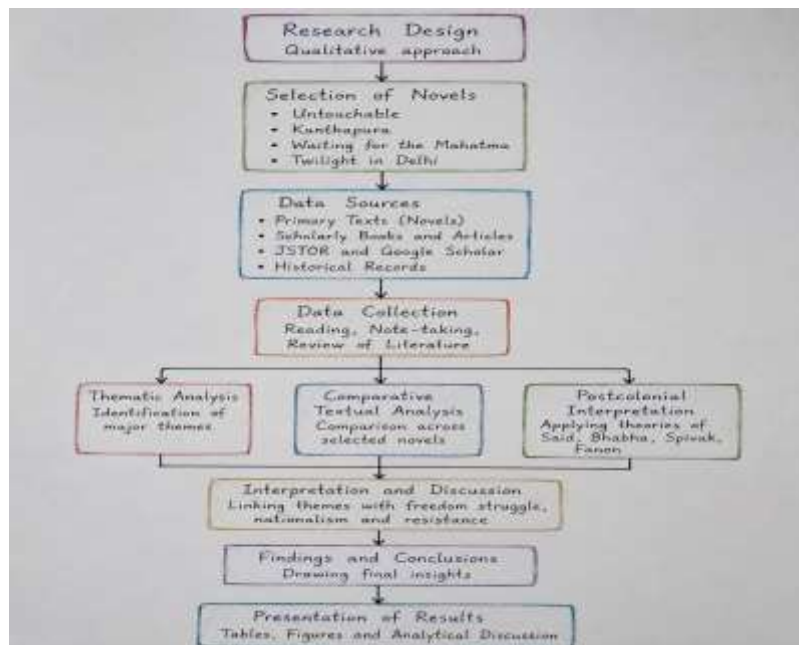


Figure 4. Research Methodology Flowchart

The overall research workflow of this study is presented in conceptual form in Figure 4. This workflow proceeds sequentially through a set of core research nodes, including text selection, data collection, thematic analysis, postcolonial interpretation, and comparative literature assessment.

5. Analysis and Discussion

5.1 Colonial Oppression and Social Exploitation

Indian English novels themed around India's independence struggle portray colonialism as a multi-dimensional system that combines political rule, cultural oppression, and socioeconomic exploitation, and critically depict the destruction British imperialism inflicted on Indian society. Study [3] points out that *Untouchable* uses its protagonist Bakha to expose caste discrimination and colonial indifference, while *Twilight in Delhi*, referenced in Study [1], illustrates the decline of traditional culture and the fracturing of individual psychology.

In the novel *Untouchable* by Indian writer Mulk Raj Anand, the protagonist Bakha's experiences of humiliation and spiritual suffering serve as a concrete embodiment of the dual yoke of caste oppression and colonial neglect. A close textual analysis centered on the core plot—where Bakha accidentally touches a high-caste Hindu at a marketplace and is publicly insulted—clearly shows that Anand uses individual suffering to connect to nationalist demands for justice, equality, and human dignity, laying a solid foundation for the central argument of the entire work.

Ahmed Ali's novel *Twilight in Delhi* portrays colonialism through the emotional and cultural experiences of Mir Nihal. Through the experiences of the work's core character, Mir Nihal, who is deeply attached to the traditions and historical identity of Old Delhi, the novel traces the gradual destruction of Mughal culture and the continuous erosion of social values under British colonial rule. The line "Delhi was no longer the city he had loved." carries the protagonist's emotional alienation and cultural grief. Ali defines colonialism not only as political rule, but also as cultural displacement and fractured identity, turning individual loss into a collective narrative that pushes back against colonial cultural destruction.

Table 7. Colonial Themes in Selected Novels

Novel	Colonial Theme	Literary Representation
<i>Untouchable</i>	Social oppression	Caste discrimination and humiliation

<i>Kanthapura</i>	Political resistance	Rural mobilization against colonialism
<i>Waiting for the Mahatma</i>	National awakening	Gandhian political consciousness
<i>Twilight in Delhi</i>	Cultural decline	Loss of identity under colonial rule

Table 7 summarizes the core colonial themes presented in all sample novels selected for this study. Through the experiences of their characters and narrative conflicts, these Indian English novels expose the multiple political, social, and cultural consequences brought about by colonial oppression.



Figure 5. Colonial Resistance in Indian English Fiction

Figure 5 maps out the evolutionary sequence extending from colonial exploitation, through literary resistance, to nationalist awakening, and explicitly establishes the novel as the core medium that challenges imperial ideology and awakens the general public's political consciousness.

5.2 Nationalism and Patriotic Consciousness

Nationalism is one of the most dominant major themes in Indian English novels focused on the country's independence struggle. It serves both as a political force of resistance against colonial rule and an emotional bond that ties together collective identity [21]. The cross-caste cohesion depicted in Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* and the linking of individual and collective life in R.K. Narayan's *Waiting for the Mahatma* both serve as proof of this pattern; the nationalism at work in this category of novels carries the core characteristics of sacrifice, courage, and social commitment [22].

Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* frames anti-colonial nationalism as a rural collective movement rooted in Gandhian thought and social solidarity. The novel's protagonist, Moorthy, mobilizes villagers to cast off fear and division and transforms political resistance into a shared moral responsibility for the general public through public gatherings, discussions, and nonviolent protests. The line featured in the work, "Truth and nonviolence are our only weapons," anchors the core of Gandhian modes of action. Combined with the text's narrative details of women's participation in protests, it becomes clear that the nationalism Rao constructs goes beyond mere political resistance, extending to the spheres of social solidarity and communal consciousness.

R.K. Narayan's *Waiting for the Mahatma* portrays the growth of nationalist consciousness through Sriram's personal transformation during the independence movement., unpacking the approach the work adopts to portray the connotations of nationalism during the Indian independence movement through protagonist Sriram's coming-of-age arc: it first lays out the protagonist's initial state of aimless confusion, traces his transformation of developing a formal patriotic commitment under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi, uses the novel's line "serving Gandhi is serving the nation" to corroborate this awakening, and clarifies the collective symbolic significance of this shift.

Narayan further illustrates that the nationalism depicted in Narayan's work extends beyond mere political participation, encompassing deep important dimensions including ethical responsibility and emotional sacrifice, and frames patriotism as a private moral experience bound to the cause of national liberation.

Table 8. Nationalist Elements and Literary Representation

Nationalist Element	Literary Representation
Freedom Movement	Mass participation and resistance
Patriotism	Sacrifice for national identity
Gandhian Influence	Non-violence and unity
National Consciousness	Political awakening among common people

Table 8 demonstrates that nationalist representation in Indian English novels extends beyond political ideology into emotional, ethical, and cultural dimensions., this study puts forward its core argument: the nationalist representations in Indian English novels break through the limitations of a single political ideology, expanding to three dimensions: emotion, culture, and ethics. These representations can

consolidate anti-colonial solidarity, inspire a spirit of sacrifice, and construct a collective identity for diverse groups.

COMPARATIVE NATIONALIST THEMES				
NATIONALIST THEMES ↓	Untouchable (Mulk Raj Anand)	Kanthapura (Raja Rao)	Waiting for the Mahatma (R. K. Narayan)	Twilight in Delhi (Ahmed Ali)
Patriotism	Develops through the pain of exploitation and social injustice.	Strong sense of love for the motherland expressed through action.	Shown through moral transformation and loyalty to the nation.	Revealed in the desire to protect India's cultural heritage.
Unity and Solidarity	Highlights the need for equality and unity among all people.	Villagers unite across caste, creed and class for a common cause.	Brings people together in the Gandhian movement.	Emphasizes Hindu-Muslim unity against colonial division.
Resistance Against Colonialism	Resistance emerges against both social and colonial oppression.	Mass resistance through non-violent movements and protests.	Non-cooperation and civil disobedience influence the people.	Intellectual and cultural resistance against colonial rule.
Sacrifice	Silent suffering of the oppressed becomes a form of sacrifice.	People sacrifice comfort and safety for freedom.	Personal desires are sacrificed for national good.	Characters sacrifice traditions and comforts for national identity.
Awakening of Consciousness	Social awareness grows through injustice experienced by Bakha.	Political awakening spreads in rural society.	Moral and political awakening inspired by Gandhi.	Cultural and historical consciousness awakens among characters.

Figure 6. Comparative Nationalist Themes

Figure 6 presents the nationalist representations of the selected sample novels in a comparative format, anchors four major themes, including patriotism and sacrifice, and reveals the diversity of nationalist expressions in Indian English novels.

5.3 Gandhian Ideology and Revolutionary Consciousness

Gandhi's philosophy has exerted a profound influence on Indian English novels centred on India's independence struggle. Core concepts of his thought, including nonviolence, truth, solidarity, and moral resistance, appear repeatedly in relevant texts [12]; in *Kanthapura*, this ideology sparks political awakening in rural communities, while *Waiting for the Mahatma* illustrates the transformative effect of Gandhi's leadership on ordinary individuals. These novels also embed revolutionary consciousness in narratives centred on sacrifice, extending resistance into the cultural and psychological dimensions of imperial rule [22].

In Indian English fiction centred on the freedom struggle, Gandhian ideology is represented not merely as a political strategy, but as a moral and spiritual philosophy capable of transforming both individuals and society. Novelists portray Gandhi's principles of truth, non-violence, self-discipline, and sacrifice as ethical foundations for resisting colonial oppression. Rather than encouraging violent rebellion, these novels advocate moral resistance rooted in justice and humanity.

In *Kanthapura*, Raja Rao demonstrates how Gandhian philosophy reshapes the social and ethical structure of village life. The villagers gradually abandon fear and social division and begin to embrace

collective discipline and peaceful resistance under the influence of Gandhian teachings. The statement, “We should not hate the British, but resist injustice,” reflects the moral essence of Gandhian thought, where resistance is guided by truth and ethical responsibility rather than revenge or hatred. Through symbolic acts such as fasting, prayer meetings, spinning khadi, and non-violent protests, the novel presents revolution as a process of spiritual awakening and collective moral reform.

Similarly, *Waiting for the Mahatma* explores the emotional and ethical dimensions of Gandhian philosophy through the experiences of ordinary individuals involved in the nationalist movement. Gandhi’s presence in the narrative functions as a source of moral inspiration that encourages selflessness, discipline, and devotion to society. The novel presents revolutionary consciousness not as violent extremism, but as inner moral transformation grounded in non-violence and social responsibility. R.K. Narayan, therefore, portrays Gandhian ideology as a force capable of harmonising political resistance with ethical humanity.

Table 9. Gandhian Ideology Across Fictional Narratives

Novel	Gandhian Element	Narrative Impact
<i>Kanthapura</i>	Non-violence	Collective rural resistance
<i>Waiting for the Mahatma</i>	Moral transformation	Political awakening
<i>Untouchable</i>	Social reform	Human dignity and equality

Table 9 compiled for The narratives collectively demonstrate that Gandhian thought in Indian English novels is not limited to the political sphere alone, but has become a moral framework for social reform and national reconstruction.

5.4 Cultural Identity and Indigenous Consciousness

Indian English novels centred on the anti-colonial struggle take the preservation of cultural identity as their core proposition. Colonial authorities exported foreign culture and marginalised native traditions to implement cultural infiltration, while local [6], [7].

writers reconstructed national identity through diverse symbolic elements. *Delhi Dusk* [1] and *Kanthapura* respectively present the creative practices of cultural anxiety and indigenous solidarity [17, 8].

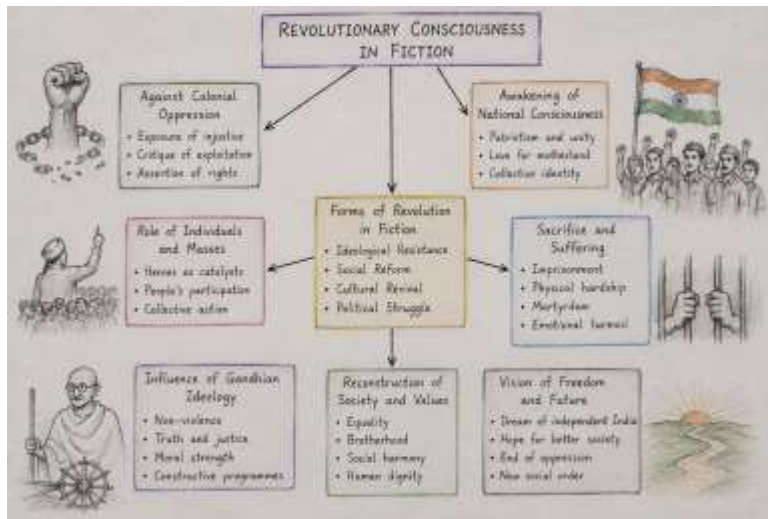


Figure 7. Revolutionary Consciousness in Fiction

The three core influencing factors outlined in Figure 7 of this paper, including Gandhism, have collectively shaped the nationalist consciousness of Indian English novels.

5.5 Women in Freedom Narratives and Religious Harmony

Women in Indian English novels centred on India's independence struggle are never passive bystanders to the national movement; they are active participants who embody courage, sacrifice, and social resilience. In Kanthapura[22], women serve as the core of Gandhian-style resistance, breaking through the shackles of patriarchy and expanding the boundaries of the literary narrative of nationalism.

Raja Rao presents Rangamma as a powerful symbol of women's participation in nationalist resistance. Influenced by Gandhian ideology, she motivates village women to participate in protest movements and public demonstrations against colonial authority. Through her actions and leadership, the novel portrays rural women as active contributors to the freedom struggle rather than passive observers. It then points out the narrative breakthrough Rao achieves: departing from the traditional setting that frames women as accessories to male revolutionaries, Rao creates an independent political subject capable of shaping rural nationalist consciousness. This portrayal challenges patriarchal limitations within traditional society. It also expands the role of women in anti-colonial resistance and presents nationalism as an inclusive social movement.

Raja Rao's novels demonstrate that during the era of colonial upheaval, women occupied a central position in the nationalist movement. The women in Raja Rao's narrative contribute not only to political mobilisation, but also to social unity and cultural preservation. Their emotional resilience and moral courage strengthen the ethical foundation of Gandhian nationalism and reinforce collective resistance against colonial oppression.

Table 10. Representation of Women in Freedom-Struggle Fiction

Novel	Representation of Women	Narrative Role
<i>Kanthapura</i>	Political participation	Leadership in resistance
<i>Waiting for the Mahatma</i>	Nationalist support	Emotional and ideological strength
<i>Twilight in Delhi</i>	Cultural preservation	Protection of traditions

The representation of women in these novels demonstrates, based on Table 10, that the female characters in Indian English novels hold dual functions of political resistance and cultural continuity, which strengthen the broad nationalist discourse of the works.

All the anti-colonial themed novels curated for this study take religious harmony as their major theme, position community solidarity as a necessary condition to counter the colonial divide-and-rule strategy and realise national liberation, and cite references 11 to corroborate that freedom is a shared vision of the entire nation that transcends internal divisions [11], [15].

5.6 Comparative Analysis of Selected Novels

The selected novels collectively portray resistance literature, nationalist consciousness, and cultural reconstruction through their central characters. The experiences of Bakha, Moorthy, Sriram, and Mir Nihal reflect different dimensions of India's anti-colonial struggle. Through these characters, Indian English fiction connects personal suffering with broader questions of dignity, freedom, and cultural identity.

Table 11. Comparative Character Analysis

Novel	Major Character	Symbolic Representation
<i>Untouchable</i>	Bakha	Social oppression and dignity
<i>Kanthapura</i>	Moorthy	Gandhian nationalism

<i>Waiting for the Mahatma</i>	Sriram	Political awakening
<i>Twilight in Delhi</i>	Mir Nihal	Cultural resistance

In Indian writer Mulk Raj Anand's full-length novel *Untouchable*, the core protagonist Bakha is a teenage sweeper trapped under the dual oppression of caste discrimination and colonial neglect. In the story, he accidentally brushes against a high-caste Hindu on a crowded street, and is publicly subjected to the verbal abuse: "Posh, posh, sweeper coming!" His silent suffering encapsulates the collective predicament of India's marginalized groups during the colonial era. Anand presents Bakha as a symbol of resistance against caste oppression and colonial injustice. The character's humiliation reflects the broader social inequalities of colonial India and connects personal suffering with demands for social reform and national awakening.

In *Kanthapura*, Raja Rao presents Moorthy as an ideal Gandhian nationalist leader. Influenced by Gandhi's philosophy, Moorthy encourages villagers to participate in non-violent resistance movements and promotes social unity across caste divisions. The slogan, "Truth and non-violence are our only weapons," reflects the ethical foundations of Gandhian nationalism. Through Moorthy's leadership, the novel portrays rural India as an active participant in the freedom struggle and highlights the role of collective awakening in resisting colonial oppression.

In R.K. Narayan's *Waiting for the Mahatma*, the novel's young protagonist Sriram starts out naive and immature, completely disconnected from real-world politics. After coming into contact with Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian independence movement, he gradually develops a clear sense of patriotism. The formation of his belief that "serving Gandhi meant serving the nation" marks the completion of his transformation. This awakening symbolizes the emergence of moral responsibility and patriotic maturity among ordinary individuals during the independence struggle. Narayan uses this character arc to demonstrate that nationalism is not merely a political act, but also a growth process that encompasses emotional development and ethical commitment.

In Ahmed Ali's *Twilight in Delhi*, Mir Nihal symbolises cultural resistance against colonial transformation. Deeply attached to the traditions, values, and historical identity of Old Delhi, he experiences emotional suffering as colonial influence gradually weakens the social and cultural fabric of the city. His feeling that "Delhi was no longer the city he had loved" reflects the psychological alienation created by colonial modernity and cultural displacement. Through Mir Nihal's attachment to traditional life, Ahmed Ali presents cultural memory itself as a subtle form of resistance against imperial domination and identity loss. The character therefore represents not only personal grief, but also the broader decline of indigenous identity under colonial rule.

Based on the analysis presented in Table 11, the comparative discussion demonstrates that the protagonists of Indian English novels symbolise the nation's collective experience, strengthen anti-

colonial consciousness, and transform literature into a powerful medium of nationalist mobilisation and cultural resistance.

6. Implications and Original Contribution

This study critically examines the role of Indian English novels in representing India's freedom struggle and anti-colonial consciousness, and it holds threefold academic, cultural, and educational significance. These works are far from being mere literary creations; instead, they functioned as ideological tools during the British colonial rule that advanced political awakening, cultural reconstruction, and nationalist mobilisation. This analysis will be developed through the study of four core texts, with supporting literature cited.

This study integrates postcolonial theory, nationalism studies, and resistance literature to construct a comparative analytical framework, offering a brand-new perspective for Indian English literary criticism. Unlike most existing studies, which are limited by their focus on single texts or isolated theoretical interpretations, the interdisciplinary nature of this study can strengthen the relevant academic discourse surrounding colonialism, literary nationalism, and identity construction. Drawing on the core concepts of Said, Bhabha, Spivak, and Fanon, this study builds solid theoretical depth for the interpretation of Indian English novels themed on India's independence struggle.

This study holds prominent cultural research value and is centred on framing literature as a vehicle for preserving Indigenous identity and resisting colonial cultural rule. Colonialism once eroded India's traditions and social structure through political and ideological control. Existing scholarship has noted that Indian English novels respond to this colonial control by reconstructing cultural identities. The research samples examined in this study depict the cultural struggles of ordinary people, and their core spirit of resistance preserves historical consciousness and national heritage within contemporary discourse.

The educational application value of this study covers four major humanities fields: literary studies, postcolonial studies, comparative literature, and nationalism studies. It can support curriculum development at institutions of higher education, facilitate the improvement of three core student competencies, including the ability to break through the framework of purely literary aesthetics, and is centrally grounded in the integrated approach that combines historical interpretation and literary analysis.

Table 12. Academic and Social Implications

Area	Major Implication
Literary Studies	Expanded understanding of resistance literature

Postcolonial Studies	Critical interpretation of colonial discourse
Nationalism Studies	Analysis of nationalist consciousness
Cultural Studies	Preservation of indigenous identity
Education	Interdisciplinary academic application
Society	Awareness of historical and cultural struggles

Drawing on Table 12 and supported by this study, this study conducts an analysis of novels centred on India's English-language independence struggle. Its value extends beyond the scope of traditional literary criticism, reaching into the broader domains of cultural and educational cognition. This study breaks through the boundaries of traditional literary criticism, extending its value to the broader fields of cultural and educational cognition. It not only reinforces the core functions of fictional works in shaping public perception and preserving historical memory, but also adds new value to postcolonial academic research; the texts selected for this study expose four types of social realities, advocate for the spirit of resistance and national unity, and establish an intrinsic link between literature and sociopolitical transformation. These texts serve as a "literary torch" for India's independence struggle, capable of challenging colonial narratives and speaking up for marginalised groups.

This study adopts an integrated comparative research approach. Unlike previous similar studies, which were limited to only thematic description or single-author interpretation, this work incorporates four categories of analytical tools—including nationalism theory—to generate original academic insights for three major research fields: Indian English literature, nationalism studies, and postcolonial criticism.

7. Conclusion and Future Scope

This study takes narratives of the independence struggle in Indian English novels from the period of British colonial rule over India as its central theme. Its core research goal is to critically examine the textual representation of India's independence movement and analyse the underlying logic that enables this category of literary narratives to serve as a powerful tool for anti-colonial resistance, national awakening, and cultural reconstruction.

This study adopts a comparative textual analysis approach, selects four core novels the *Untouchable*, *Kanthapura*, *Waiting for the Mahatma*, and *Twilight in Delhi*—as research samples, integrates postcolonial theory, nationalism theory, and the research framework of resistance literature, and advances the research along two core pathways: First, it examines how novelists present anti-colonial struggle, Gandhian philosophy, cultural identity, and collective resistance in their narratives; second, it clarifies the role of these fictional works in shaping historical memories and emotional bonds related to India's freedom movement. This study ultimately finds that Indian English novels constitute a key ideological and cultural force that boosts national consciousness and supports the development of the resistance movement.

The sampled texts define colonialism as a system with the dual attributes of political domination and social exploitation. By portraying the suffering of the public and highlighting themes including collective solidarity and Gandhian thought, these works turn literature into a site of resistance that challenges imperial authority, while also fulfilling the function of protecting local indigenous culture. This study has successfully achieved all its preset research objectives.

This study is grounded in colonial discourse theory and subaltern identity theory, and advances the academic community's in-depth understanding of the intrinsic links among culture, politics, and society. Against the current backdrop of globalisation, cultural transformation, and identity conflict, the theoretical texts that underpin this study continue to spark discussions around nationalism, justice, equality, and social responsibility.

They are core texts for understanding the emotional and ideological foundations of the Indian nation-state, and hold triple documentary value across the literary, historical, and cultural fields. While this study makes a corresponding contribution to the academic organization of literature related to India's independence movement, it has three core limitations: it only covers a selected set of Indian English novels, and does not incorporate relevant local-language literary traditions; it only adopts qualitative textual interpretation and a postcolonial theoretical perspective; and its limited research scope fails to accommodate more important texts, revolutionary narratives, and interdisciplinary research approaches.

To address these three limitations, future research can expand along three directions: carry out comparative research of the two categories of literature, explore dimensions such as gendered nationalism, and introduce multidisciplinary research methods. This study not only opens up space for subsequent research but also reaffirms that Indian English novels are a core literary medium that records India's process of pursuing freedom, constructing identity, and awakening national consciousness.

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